



# IRELAND

# Bridge nakladatelství

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Illustrations: Ondřej Strnad ©

Not for sale.

Atlantic Ocean

NORTHERN IRELAND (UK)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



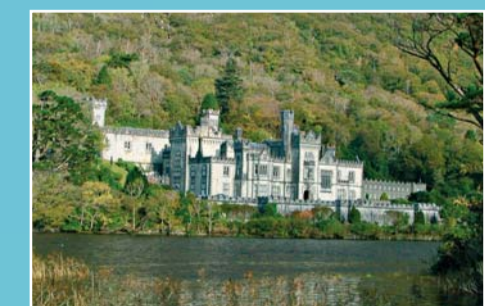
According to a legend, the shamrock was used by St. Patrick to illustrate the Holy Trinity; today it is a popular symbol of Ireland.



Irish Sea



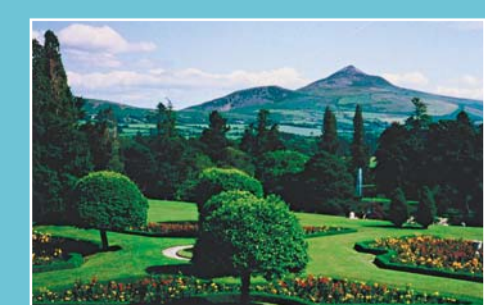
**Galway** is unique among Irish cities because of its strong Gaelic language and cultural tradition. It lies close to the Galway Gaeltacht. Many people in the city speak Gaelic and students come there to study it at the university. Galway is called "the city of festivals" - there are annual music and arts festivals, an oyster festival, a horse-racing festival and others. Claddagh village, just outside the old walls of Galway, gave birth to the Claddagh ring.



The romantic neo-gothic **Kylemore Abbey** was built in the 19th century as a private house. In 1920, Benedictine nuns, who had escaped to Ireland from war-torn Belgium, moved there and opened a school for girls. It is still running, but some parts of the building are open to visitors. There is also a Victorian walled garden with the longest flower-beds in Ireland, and a church which is a tiny replica of Norwich Cathedral in England.



**Newgrange (Brú na Bóinne)** was built around 3200 BC. It is a huge man-made circular mound of earth and stone into which a narrow passage leads and ends in a chamber. On the morning of the winter solstice, the rising sun shines through the passage to the chamber and illuminates it for just 17 minutes. There are great examples of megalithic art, such as triple spirals carved into the stones. According to Irish mythology, the old gods Tuathá Dé Danann lived there.



Situated in the scenic Wicklow Mountains, **Powerscourt** is famous for its large gardens, perhaps the highest sea cliffs in Europe, rising 600 m from the Atlantic. On a clear day it is allegedly possible to see a third of Ireland from the top. The Cliffs of Moher, at the edge of The Burren area in Co. Clare, provide some of the most amazing views in Ireland. The Aran Islands and many statues. Five kilometers from Powerscourt lies Ireland's highest waterfall, falling over 120 metres into the Dargle Valley.



Ireland has spectacular cliffs. **Slieve League**, situated on the West coast of Co. Donegal, are probably the highest sea cliffs in Europe, rising 600 m from the Atlantic. On a clear day it is allegedly possible to see a third of Ireland from the top. The Cliffs of Moher, at the edge of The Burren area in Co. Clare, provide some of the most amazing views in Ireland. The Aran Islands and many statues. Five kilometers from Powerscourt lies Ireland's highest waterfall, falling over 120 metres into the Dargle Valley.



Stone circles are fairly common in Ireland. The most extensive concentration of them can be found at Beaghmore - there are seven low stone circles and ten stone rows (**Beaghmore Stone Circles**). The Beaghmore area was probably occupied from Neolithic times, but the stones were raised in the early Bronze Age (approx. 2000 - 1200 BC). They could have served for religious and social gatherings, for watching the movements of the sun and moon, or as a burial place.



**Clonmacnoise**, the ancient monastic site, has one of finest round towers and high crosses typical of Ireland. A high cross, a standing stone cross with a circle, often richly decorated with abstract ornaments, figures, and biblical scenes, is a characteristic symbol of Celtic Christianity. Round towers are early medieval stone towers, between 18 to 40 metres high, usually standing close to a church or monastery. People think they served as bell towers, lookouts for invaders and as places of refuge during Viking raids.



**Belfast**, the capital of Northern Ireland, saw some of the worst of "the Troubles" - the conflict between the nationalists (mainly Catholics), protesting against the British rule, and the unionists (mainly Protestants), supporting it. The conflict started in the late 1960s and came to an end with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. It is still reflected in murals (wall paintings) with political motifs. Other city attractions include Victorian buildings such as the City Hall.



**Cobh**, a port town on the south coast of Ireland, was the departure point for 2.5 million of the 6 million Irish people who emigrated to North America between 1848 and 1950 because of famine and poverty. To commemorate this, there is a statue of Annie Moore, the first Irish immigrant to pass through Ellis Island in New York (the main port for the immigrants entering the US). Cobh, formerly called Queenstown, was the final stop of the Titanic - from there the ship set out on its tragic journey across the Atlantic.



**Ben Bulbin**, this unusually shaped table-top mountain (527 m), is considered one of Ireland's most beautiful peaks. It was formed during the Ice Age and owes its strange shape to moving glaciers that cut into the earth. The Irish poet W. B. Yeats was much influenced by the surrounding area and often wrote about it. One of his famous poems is titled "Under Ben Bulbin" and the last three lines ("Cast a cold eye / On life, on death, / Horseman, pass by") are carved into his gravestone.



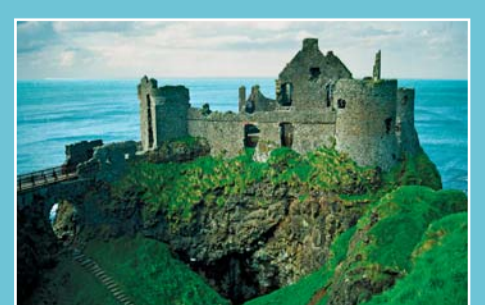
**The Connemara National Park** is an area with scenic mountains, bogs, grasslands and forests and very rich in wildlife. Many kinds of birds live there, as well as rabbits, foxes, bats and a variety of butterflies and dragonflies. It is home to Connemara ponies, which roam freely through the park. Carnivorous plants grow there - the bogs offer very few nutrients, so some plants obtain nutrients from the insects they catch and consume. There are also 4,000-year-old megalithic tombs preserved in the park.



**Cork**, situated on the River Lee, began as a monastic settlement in the 6th century. The city's landmarks are St. Finbar's Cathedral, and the 18th-century St. Ann's Shandon (a church with a famous bell tower which has two sides built from red stone and two from grey stone). The modern administrative County Hall is the tallest building in the Republic of Ireland (67 m). County Cork has always had a reputation for resistance to the British, which gave it the nickname "The Rebel County".



**Dublin** is Ireland's capital and largest city, and was founded by the Vikings. Dublin Castle was the seat of British rule until Ireland won independence in the 1920s. In 1916, the city was the site of a significant rebellion - the Easter Rising. The Irish republicans seized strategic places in Dublin and proclaimed an independent Irish Republic, but after six days the rising was suppressed by the British and the leaders were executed. Dublin Trinity College is Ireland's oldest university, founded in 1592.



**Dunluce Castle**, situated on the north coast of Ireland near the Giant's Causeway, is one of the most picturesque Irish castles. Built between the 14th and 16th centuries, it stands on a rock and is accessible via a bridge. In the 17th century, the castle was deserted after an untimely incident: preparations of a Christmas banquet were in progress when suddenly the kitchen collapsed into the sea, taking with it several servants. After that, the owners refused to live in the castle.



**Gallarus Oratory**, a tiny building shaped like an upturned boat, is situated on the Dingle Peninsula in Co. Kerry. Built without mortar simply by placing the stones on one another in the 7th and 8th centuries, it is the best preserved early Christian church in Ireland. It is dim, with only a small window opposite the door. Legend has it that if a person climbs out through the window, their soul will be cleansed. It is, however, hardly possible because the window is only 18 x 12 cm.